UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
COMMONWEALTH HONORS COLLEGE (CHC) COUNCIL

The charge of the Commonwealth Honors College Council is to provide advice to the Dean on all matters relating to the administration of the Honors College, its curriculum and policy, including;

- honors course approvals;
- standards governing the establishment, modification and termination of all Departmental Honors and Multidisciplinary Honors programs;
- standards governing CHC student admission and graduation; and
- standards governing and the direction of Honors theses/projects and independent studies.

Minutes

Date **March 11, 2024 12:20–2:00 PM**

Location **via Zoom** https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/92399061648?pwd=NUpjbjcvQ3R0S3lRS0s0UlVFdEd0QT09
Meeting ID: 923 9906 1648 **Passcode:** 029937

Attendance ~~Anthony Paik,~~ Ben Marlin, Deepika Marya, Dominick Usher, Elena Carbone, ~~Jack Minella~~, Jean MacKimmie, Kim Dion, Kim Tremblay, Luis Marentes, Lynda Schwartz, ~~Madalina Akli,~~ Mari Castañeda, Melanie Radik, Michael Krezmien, ~~Muzzo Uysal~~, ~~Neal Anderson~~, Patrick Sullivan, Sindiso MnisiWeeks, Stacy Giufre, Susan Ware, ~~Tom Brashear~~, ~~Valentina Ravaioli~~, ~~Xavier Aparicio~~, Morgan Donovan-Hall (guest), Casey Krone (Minutes)

Introductions

Approve Minutes Minutes are unanimously approved with 3 abstentions.

Announcements

Updates from the Dean (*Mari Castañeda)*

- International Women's Day was last week on Friday and I participated in an event at Salem State University run by the American Council of Education Massachusetts Women's Network where awards were given for great work happening in the state. Representing not just CHC but UMass as a whole.
- Daffodil Lecture is March 12, 2024, 5pm. Professor Sonya Atalay is speaking on Braiding Knowledges to Transform Science: Climate Change, Cultural Places, and Food Sovereignty. HONORS 201H students are required to attend. We usually have about 500-600 students and community members attend. Professor Atalay received an NSF grant recently for the Center for Braiding Indigenous Knowledges and Science.
- Advising is busy ramping up for Fall 2024 registration.
- Course scheduling for Spring 2025 is taking place.
- Friday we will release our Call for Proposals for HONORS 391AH: Discovery Seminar. We already have received multiple inquiries from interested faculty. Several new seminars this coming fall, hopefully more next spring.
- Busy with the annual spring meetings with joint faculty and their department chairs. All joint faculty are now tenured. Several are full professors and several are up for full professor next year.
- Celebration of Excellence takes place on Thursday, May 16 at 6:30pm at the Mullins Center. Kicks off Commencement weekend for the whole campus. Council members are invited to participate in the procession and stage party. HPDs and 499 seminar/independent thesis instructors are invited as well.
- CHC Senior Lecturer Susan Ware will be awarded the Faculty Professional Improvement Fellowship for Fall 2024.

New Business

1. Transfer student discussion (*Morgan Donovan Hall*)
    a. Morgan Donovan Hall presented on challenges faced by transfer students and what the university and CHC can do to support transfer student success. Common barriers for transfer students include income, part-time status, transfer credit loss, transfer credit equivalences, navigating bureaucracy, and social adjustments.
    b. About 1/3 of students will transfer. 16% of students who start at a community college earn a bachelor's degree.
    c. Transfers @ UMass – 21% of entering class. 37% from community colleges. 23% transfer with associate degree from MA community colleges.
        i. Barriers – lack of scholarships – limited space in majors
        ii. Limited courses after 4pm
        iii. Transfer credit practices
    d. Main Admissions challenge in terms of CHC is the limited space. We can only bring in 100 transfer per year. Spring consideration, space available basis, 50% yield rate.
        i. If a student applies by deadline, they are considered. Late applications have less chance of being considered.
    e. Requirements for transfers from Massachusetts Community College
        i. Mass Transfer – Completing a Commonwealth Honors Program – 3.2 and 3 honors courses
        ii. Given priority until no more space.
        iii. Regular transfer – 3.8-4.0 AND impressive application
        iv. Transfers in CHC by school/college – most from CNS, SBS, and SOM
            1. Interchange – other UMass campuses
            2. Mass transfer
            3. Transfer other
        v. Most transfer as sophomores, then juniors.
    f. Identifying CHP students is difficult as it does not always show on the transcript or shows in different ways. We must look closely at the transcript to identify courses and gpa.
        i. CHC sometimes has students come to advising after the semester starts and tell us they are CHP students. M. Donovan Hall double-checked this and over the last 5 semesters 4 students have been missed.
    g. D. Usher indicates that retention is comparable for our transfer students who are coming in as CHC with our first year admits. Gap is those admitted to UMass who don't start as CHC and are admitted to CHC later. Starting at CHC first years graduate at 86%, transfers at 85%, not starting at CHC then admitted from on campus are 74% and 78%.
        i. Transfer students make up about 7% of overall CHC population but 14% of students withdrawn from CHC are transfer students.

h. S. Ware indicates she has heard that sometimes transfer students can't get into a major and asks if transfer students have equal access to dorms. M. Donovan Hall indicates that her understanding is that as long as the housing preference form is in on time, they'll get a room. J. MacKimmie confirms that SACL holds 700 beds for transfers but that CHCRC doesn't reserve any beds, it's on space available basis with more space in the spring. M. Castañeda indicates that submitting forms on time is an issue.

i. K. Tremblay asks what percent of transfer students are Mass Transfer? M. Donovan Hall says she thinks it's 23%. K. Tremblay asks why is their gpa requirement a 3.2 and not 3.4? On campus transfer students here must have 3.4. M. Donovan Hall clarifies that requirement is part of the Commonwealth Honors Program requirements at the state level. K. Tremblay - The classes at community colleges like intro to chemistry, biology, the students tend to really struggle if they have to retake those classes here. These classes likely aren't as in-depth or rigorous as they are at UMass. Concerning, if we want these students to thrive at CHC. Concern that their gpa requirement is pretty low. M. Donovan Hall indicates that the community college transfers perform lower than the non-community college students.

~~i.~~j. K. Tremblay comments that we want to set students up for success here, but the lower gpa isn't necessarily doing that. M. Castañeda – is part of the CHP executive council which meets once per semester. The 3.2 is for the community colleges, 3.4 is for state universities. There's a gap there, coming from DHE and state. We have been having conversations about how to make sure that students are successful. Some of the feedback from the commissioner and other folks has been to put it back on us and challenge us to get the students ready, knowing the realities of where they come from instead of putting it on the students. The gpa requirement will not change any time soon. Given that there are many reasons why those students leave CHC, we are working to think through how we support even the small number we do have. We would struggle accepting more than 100 a year. In CHP meetings there have been conversations about the fact that community colleges are trying very hard to support their students and make them university-ready so they can be successful as a transfer at a university. There are discussions about collaboration across colleges and universities. One challenge is that there is a lot of turnover at the community college level.

~~j.~~k. S. MnisiWeeks asks about the gap between the 100 students admitted to CHC and how many are actually eligible for CHC membership. M. Donovan Hall indicates that there could be about twice as many students eligible as are actually admitted to CHC. In the past, it has been a struggle to forecast who is going to come and we have definitely exceeded the 100 target because of interest. The students who applied a little later, a lot of them don't come because they don't get into CHC. We find a lot of students working part time or more, have families, some students are rethinking being here at UMass, not just being in CHC. Other institutions have night or weekend classes that we don't have a tradition of. We have a very traditional-aged student body, but that might change more with Flex Learning. That's still a year or more away while we figure that out.

~~k.~~l. M. Donovan Hall – I don't think it's well known that we don't have many scholarships for transfer students. First year students admitted to CHC automatically gives them a big scholarship so the $600 fee is completely covered. Mostly there is no additional aid for transfer admits, and many students can't afford that.

~~l.~~m. K. Tremblay asks for clarification on if the $600/year CHC fee is included in the total costs for the financial aid package. M. Donovan Hall indicates that it is above and

beyond and that the average student here with highest need has a gap of about $3,000 per semester. The total CHC fee is included in the bill.

i. M. Castañeda relates conversations with the previous chancellor about trying to look at that fee and exempting certain students from it. The fee does not come from the campus or CHC, instead it comes from the Board of Trustees of the campus system.

~~m.~~n. D. Usher talks about CHC advising support of transfer students. There are group advising sessions for first year students, and a straightforward curriculum and path. For transfer students, we do campaigns for individual appointments because their path might look different and be very individualized. We give them individualized attention, and work and effort are put into a separate transfer meet up/mixer for newly admitted transfer students to connect. There is specific outreach and initiatives from members of our advising staff to make sure they're on track, have a clear path to graduation, and understand full vs partial curriculum.

~~n.~~o. M. Castañeda indicates that we have asked the CHP network to let us know when a student has been accepted to UMass and CHC so we can reach out directly to those students.

2. Honors Course Review (*Mari Castañeda*)

- MATH 490RMH, 3 credits, approval
- ANTHRO 102H, 4 credits, reapproval
- ANTHRO 104H, 4 credits, reapproval
- ECON 104H, 4 credits, reapproval
- ECON 204H, 4 credits, reapproval
- ECON 499C, 4 credits & ECON 499D, 4 credits, reapproval (8 credits total)
- ENGLISH 254H, 4 credits, reapproval
- GEOLOGY 103H, 4 credits, reapproval
- ICONS 289H, 4 credits, reapproval
- MATH 563H, 3 credits, reapproval
- NUTRITN 130H, 4 credits, reapproval
    - List for this year is almost complete, might be done by April.
    - D. Usher confirms that experimental classes are reviewed after 3 years instead of 5 and that an experimental course would need to be converted to a permanent course for reapproval.
    - B. Marlin clarifies that after last meeting's procedural questions, all of the courses presented today are ready for Council review.
    - Consent agenda is unanimously approved

Committee Reports

Reports from CHC Council Representatives on other Councils

1. Academic Standards Committee Review *(Elena Carbone)*

    a. Submissions for Spring 2024 are down to a trickle. Seminars are added on this slide. Seminars account for about 44%, so the majority are still doing individually contracted theses.

    b. HI's are fairly similar both semesters.

    c. ISH – generally get more in the spring.

    d. Next slide is how #'s fall out for distribution by college, does not include seminars.

i. Majority of proposals – CNS, Engin, SBS, HFA account for 2/3 to ¾.

e. We will have more multi year data at next meeting.

f. These numbers include non-CHC students doing a thesis.

g. M. Castañeda – with the thesis seminars we are seeing some instructors getting ready to retire so might see one or two seminars not being offered next year. We are reaching out to departments to see if another faculty member might be interested in teaching that seminar. We hope to see new proposals for seminars but are probably another year or so away from those being approved and offered.

2. Academic Matters Council *(Dominick Usher)*

   a. At the last meting there course reviews, minor revisions to concentration in Painting, BFA in Art department, Judaic/Near Eastern Studies major, and the neuroscience concentration in PBS. Other topic of discussion was about a consistent policy moving forward regarding SIP Code changes – classification of instructional programs, federal coding/statistical standard for different instruction types in a department. How something is defined, how it might impact how that particular academic program is evaluated. Might impact students seeking extended visas for study. University wants to ensure the practice of identifying/changing a SIP Code is standardized so there are no shenanigans. Farshid is putting forward a recommendation that any changes would require a formal request that indicates what is current, what is proposed, and justifications for the change. AMC wasn't voting, it was gathering feedback for what it thinks about how to move forward. Next meeting is this Wednesday, 3/13.

      i. The hope is that the course proposal for Connie Griffin's new HONORS 324H will be able to be discussed at that meeting. Hope to have it listed in Spire for Fall 2024 registration.

3. Research Council *(Thomas Brashear-Alejandro)*

   a. Tabled.

4. CHC Advisory Board (M. Castañeda)

   a. The CHC Advisory Board is composed of alumni and donors who have supported CHC. Some have names on our outside doors. We are in the process of reevaluating the board and culture and increasing the diversity of these spaces. We are cognizant of how we say things, our words, hope to do something here with CHC Council, best practices, making sure we're reflective of making a welcoming space, life affirming, positive, and having folks included in the conversation. How to be a space of inclusion, conversation, discussion as well. Don't know if there's convos like that with other Faculty Senate committees and councils.

   b. B. Marlin – do have quite a few new members this year, want to encourage people to feel free to comment on issues as they come up. The Council's charge is to provide advice to Dean, need to feel free to comment/question.

   c. K. Tremblay inquires about what sorts of things the Advisory Board discusses, given the national climate where some advisory boards have tried to force decisions at other universities. M. Castañeda responds that the board doesn't engage in governance, but is advisory in nature. CHC is currently working with the Advisory Board on a new campaign launching in the fall to create more scholarship support and recently had a conversation with the board about DEI initiatives.

Next Meeting

April 8, 2024, 12:20-2:00 pm, Zoom

https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/92399061648?pwd=NUpjbjcvQ3R0S3lRS0s0UlVFdEd0QT09

Meeting ID: 923 9906 1648 Passcode: 029937

Attachments

- Honors Course Review materials
- Minutes from 2/12/2024 meeting